Component #1: Needs, Goals & Objectives

1) Student identifies two existing data sources and one other approach for assessing student needs and describes how these data sources will be analyzed in order to identify needs and gaps in achievement.

The 3rd grade Nebraska State Reading and State Math scores from the 2010-2011 school year were analyzed to identify students that are scoring below the standard of proficiency. Specifically, there is a huge gap in achievement that exists between African American students and Caucasian students. At our school 72% of African Americans (18 out of 25 students) and 38% of Caucasians (16 out of 42 students) were considered to be not proficient or below standard (Nebraska Department of Education). In Reading, 56% of African Americans (14 out of 25 students) and 33.33% of Caucasians 14 out of 42 students) were considered to be not proficient or below the standard (Nebraska Department of Education). There were 28 out of 42 students on free and reduced lunch that also scored below the standard of proficiency (Nebraska Department of Education). This achievement gap has been occurring for several years across the U.S., for example, in Georgia, the results from the high school English in 2007-2008 showed that 61.3% of African Americans and only 25.8% of Caucasian students did not meet proficiency standards (Bruce, Getch, & Ziomek-Daigle, 2009, p. 252). One study showed that some African Americans have learned some ineffective test taking tips that have adversely affected their test results, however it is not clear where they learned the ineffective strategies (Ellis and Ryan, 2006, 26180.Others have lack of self-confidence, strong sense of cultural identity, or lack good role models (Baggerly & Parker 2005, p.387). Strategies that promote an African worldview, promote self-confidence, and teach effective test taking strategies as well as what not to do (ineffective strategies) may decrease the gap on achievement tests between Caucasians and African Americans and increase the success of African American students. While the literature and testing show huge gaps in achievement between African Americans and Caucasians, all non-SPED students that are performing below the standard of proficiency may benefit from using test taking strategies, have a strong sense of identity, self-confidence and good role models.

2) Student develops one overarching goal for the group program based on identified need; the goal aligns with the academic mission of schools.

Apply effective strategies to improve achievement test scores

3) Student develops **two** measurable objectives for session #1 of the structured group program that supports the established goal (**one** school counseling content and **one** mathematics content).

After a discussion of test taking strategies for standardized math tests, students will use one or more strategies to answer three mode and median test questions correctly.

After a discussion of attitudes and behaviors that effect student achievement, students will one attitude or behaviors that will positively influence achievement and one that would negatively influence achievement.

4) Student develops **two** measurable objectives for session #2 of the structured group program that supports the established goal (**one** school counseling content and **one** language arts content).

After a discussion on test taking strategies for standardized reading test, students will use one or more strategies to read a passage and answer three comprehension questions.

After a discussion on self-confidence and its effects on achievement, students will identify five personal strengths and assets that they possess to build up their self-confidence in themselves and their achievements.

5) Student briefly describes the importance of data-driven, needs-based programming that clearly aligns professional school counseling with the mission of schools.

Due to the nature of NCLB and the lack of funding that many schools experience it is essential that there are data-driven and needs-based programming data to show proof that the intervention (professional school counseling) is making a difference, positively effecting the students, and helping the school to achieve its mission. Needs based assessments allow the counselor to focus in on the needs of the community to develop and plan programs that will be effective for the needs of the students. Data-driven programs also provides proof of the need, and the effectiveness of the program to the community and to other stakeholder, such as parents, principals, teachers, and school boards. Data driven programs and needs based assessments can also identify needs for professional and staff development needs.

Component #2: Research- Supported and Standards-Based Content

1) Student provides step-by-step process and activities to be covered in session #1 (research support for theoretical orientation and techniques required from at least one scholarly peer reviewed counseling journal, preferably ASCA’s journal, *Professional School Counseling*. Cite/attach handouts to be used.

**Title of Session #1:** Attitudes, Behaviors, and Test taking strategies for Math

**Brief Summary of Session:** Students will identify behaviors and attitudes that effect student learning in positive and negative ways. They will also identify test taking strategies specific to math tests that may help them improve their test scores.

**Theoretical Orientation**: Solution focused therapy is going to be used as it has been proven to be effective in helping struggling readers ( Daki and Savage, 2003, p. 322). Solution focused therapy is also good for students as it focuses on the here and now and does not dwell on the past. It focuses on the solutions and not the causes of the problem. The basic idea behind the theory that the students know themselves and what strategies work for them better than the counselor will be applied to this group with some direction from the counselor due to the age and experience of the children in the group. Cognitive behavioral therapy will also be used to help guide the behavior of the students and has been proven to show effective results in increasing academic achievement and good for working with small groups (Allen, 2011, p. 219).

**Specific Group Technique**: Using questions, monitoring goal progress, and creative exercises have been found to help students that are struggling with reading (Daki and Savage, p.322). The counselor will rely on the questioning technique to help guide and direct the students to discovering solutions to their problems. The students will also be able to help track their progress through goal monitoring and charts. Techniques that will be used from Cognitive behavioral therapy include guided discovery, modeling, cognitive rehearsal, and questioning.

**Structure:** This is a six-week closed session psychoeducational group for 4th grade students. Group is limited to six students. Each session will be 30 minutes in length and the group will meet in the counseling office. The schedule will vary, so that the students are not pulled from the same class each time. This group will be offered twice a year.

**Materials/ Media:** sticky notes, pens/pencils, practice sheet with three mode and median math problems

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**

ASCA- Academic Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span. A:A1- Improve Self-concept

A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning

**Core State Academic Standard(s):**

MA K-12.4 Comprehensive Data Analysis/Probability Standard: Students will communicate data analysis/probability concepts using multiple representations to reason, solve problems, and make connections within mathematics and across disciplines. Display and Analysis: Students will organize, display, compare, and interpret data.

MA 4.4.1.d Find the mode and range for a set of whole numbers.

**Objectives:**

After a discussion of test taking strategies for standardized math tests, students will identify two test taking strategies specific to math and use them to answer three mode and median test questions correctly.

After a discussion of attitudes and behaviors that effect student achievement, students will one attitude or behavior that will positively influence achievement and one that would negatively influence achievement.

**Assessments:** Students will be given a post-test at the end of all the group sessions that will indicate if they have met the objectives of the group. See attached documents for post-test. Observations will be on-going in group and also informally in the classroom to see how students are applying what they have been learning in the group sessions.

**Procedures/Instructional Strategy:**

**Opening:** have a healthy snack and a bottle of water for each student, group purpose, group guidelines (establish together), discuss confidentiality, play an ice breaker game

**Working:**

**1)** Discussion on attitudes and behaviors that effect learning. Guided Questions: How is school going for you? What attitudes or behaviors do you have about school? Do you think those attitudes or behaviors effect learning in a good way or a bad way?

**2) Processing-** Attitudes and behavior activity (5 minutes)- give students two sticky notes and a pen/pencil. Ask them to write one attitude or behavior that would be good for learning on one of the sticky notes and one attitude or behavior that would be bad for learning that they have been doing in the classroom. If students are struggling with this, they can work together to figure it out. Remind students that there is no right or wrong answer for this activity. After two minutes, or less if needed, have each group member share what they wrote on their sticky notes. After everyone has shared, ask them to turn the sticky note over that has the attitude or behavior that is bad for learning and write down one or two things that they think that want to try to change that behavior to something good.

**\*\*Transition\*\*** How do you think attitudes and behaviors may effect how you perform on a test?

**3)** Discuss test taking skills for math. What are some things you have done on math tests to help improve your score in the past? Can you think of any things that you have heard, or think might be good to try. In math class you have been studying mode and median. What is the mode of a set of data? What is a median? If you were taking a math test and you came across a question that asked for the mode and the median how would you find the answer? What math strategies could you use that we just discussed to help you answer the question correctly?

**4) Processing-**Practice activity- (5 minutes). We're going to practice using these math test taking strategies. I'm going to hand you a sheet with three median and mode math problems. I would like you to use two of the strategies we talked about to help you answer the questions correctly. After about 3 minutes, or less if they are finished have the students share their answers. Then have each student share which two strategies they used to help them answer the questions.

**Closing-** Discuss homework- Ask each student to share one thing that they want to work on or practice between now and the next session

2) Student provides step-by-step process and activities to be covered in session #2 (research support for theoretical orientation and techniques required from at least one scholarly peer reviewed counseling journal, preferably ASCA’s journal, *Professional School Counseling*. Cite/attach handouts to be used.

**Title of Session #2:** Building self-confidence and reading strategies

**Brief Summary of Session:** Students will identify personal strengths and assets that build self-confidence and may effect achievement. They will also identify test taking strategies specific to reading tests that may help them improve their test scores.

**Theoretical Orientation:** Solution focused therapy is going to be used as it has been proven to be effective in helping struggling readers (Daki and Savage, 2003, p. 322). Solution focused therapy is also good for students as it focuses on the here and now and does not dwell on the past. It focuses on the solutions and not the causes of the problem. The basic idea behind the theory that the student know themselves and what strategies work for them better than the counselor will be applied to this group with some direction from the counselor due to the age and experience of the children in the group.Cognitive behavioral therapy will also be used to help guide the behavior of the students and has been proven to show effective results in increasing academic achievement and good for working with small groups (Allen, 2011, p. 219).

**Specific Group Technique**: Using questions, monitoring goal progress, and creative exercises have been found to help students that are struggling with reading (Daki and Savage, p.322). The counselor will rely on the questioning technique to help guide and direct the students to discovering solutions to their problems. The students will also be able to help track their progress through goal monitoring and charts. . The students will also be able to help track their progress through goal monitoring and charts. Techniques that will be used from Cognitive behavioral therapy include guided discovery, modeling, cognitive rehearsal, and questioning.

Structure: This is a six-week closed session psychoeducational group for 4th grade students. Group is limited to six students. Each session will be 30 minutes in length and the group will meet in the counseling office. The schedule will vary, so that the students are not pulled from the same class each time. This group will be offered twice a year.

Materials/ Media: Construction Paper- 5 strips(different colored- long enough that they can be made into a paper chain) for each student in the group, practice reading comprehension passage with comprehension questions, markers, pens/pencils and a stapler with staples.

Core ASCA Standard(s):

Personal/Social- Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others. PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge.

PS:A1.10 Identify personal strengths and assets.

Core State Academic Standard(s):

K-12 Comprehensive Reading Standard: Students will learn and apply reading skills and strategies to comprehend text. Comprehension: Students will extract and construct meaning using prior knowledge, applying text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading grade-level text.

LA 4.1.6.j Generate and/or answer literal, inferential, critical, and interpretive questions, supporting answers using prior knowledge and literal and inferential information from the text.

Objectives:

After a discussion on test taking strategies for standardized reading test, students will identify two strategies and use them to read a passage and answer three comprehension questions correctly.

After a discussion on self-confidence and its effects on achievement, students will identify five personal strengths and assets that they possess to build up their self-confidence in themselves and their achievements.

Assessments: Students will be given a post-test at the end of all the group sessions that will indicate if they have met the objectives of the group. See attached documents for post-test. Observations will be on-going in group and also informally in the classroom to see how students are applying what they have been learning in the group sessions.

Procedures/Instructional Strategy:

Opening: have a healthy snack and a bottle of water for each student, group purpose, group guidelines (establish together), discuss confidentiality. Review reasons for group and why it's important to do well. Go over homework from last session.

Working:

1) Discuss self-confidence. Guiding questions- what is it? How can having it help us to do better on tests? What happens if we have too much self-confidence? What happens if we don't have enough self-confidence? What is a personal strength or asset? Can you give me an example? Help students come up with examples, if needed. If you knew what your personal strengths/ assets were, do you think that would make you have more self-confidence or less self-confidence?

2) Processing-Building confidence activity (about 5 minutes)- students will be given 5 strips of colored paper and a marker. They will be instructed to write down one strength or asset that they think they have that might help them to do better on tests. Students can work together and talk among themselves to come up with ideas. Remind students that there is no wrong or right answer for this activity. After about two minutes, or sooner if students are finished, or having difficulty, bring the group together and share the strengths that they wrote. After they share a strength, begin stapling each together to form a chain. When they are finished they have created a "strengths chain." This can remind them that all their strengths put together can help them to learn and do well on tests.

\*\*\*Transition\*\*\* to transition the reading test taking tips discussion- connect the self-confidence activity by celebrating each other's different strengths, and different ways of learning. Just as each of us have different strengths, we also have different ways of learning. For example, we have different ways of figure out a word or phrase that we don't know or don't understand when we are reading.

3) Reading Tests discussion- Guiding questions- What are some of the strategies that you use when trying to figure out an unknown word, or something you don't understand when you are reading?

Sometimes on reading tests, you are given a short passage or story to read and then you have answer questions about what you read. What kinds of questions might they ask you about the story? What strategies do you think you might use or already do use when taking that kind of reading test?

4) Processing- Practice activity (5 min) We are going to practice using our test taking strategies for reading. I'm going to give you a short reading passage that has three questions to answer. I want you to use two of the reading strategies that we just talked about to help you answer the questions correctly. After about 3 minutes or sooner if everyone is done, go over the answers and ask them to share what strategies they used to answer the questions.

Closing- Discuss homework- Ask each student to share one thing that they want to work on or practice between now and the next session.

3) Student discusses the importance of supporting theoretical orientations and techniques in school counseling prevention and intervention programs.

It is important to use supporting theoretical orientation and techniques in school counseling prevention and intervention programs because they lay the foundation for the activities and interventions that we use with students. We want to be sure that what we are using with students is following best practices so we have the best chance of success. They also need to be in place to show primary stakeholders (administrators, parents, teachers, school board) that what we are doing is making a difference and is empirically supported.

**Attachments**

* [Tips\_for\_taking\_Reading\_Tests.docx](https://c1.livetext.com/folder/8967523/qrhPNGgQ_Tips_for_taking_Reading_Tests.docx)
* [Tips\_for\_Taking\_Math\_Tests.docx](https://c1.livetext.com/folder/8967523/JhHgmL66_Tips_for_Taking_Math_Tests.docx)
* [Math\_practice.docx](https://c1.livetext.com/folder/8967523/Q2aaPpo5_Math_practice.docx)
* [Reading\_practice.docx](https://c1.livetext.com/folder/8967523/r2ozDhTF_Reading_practice.docx)

Component #3: Ethical, Legal, Multicultural

1) Student identifies ethical and legal considerations in group work with minors in the schools and those specific to this group program.

I would make sure to be aware of confidentiality including discussing it with group members at the beginning of every session, so they are aware of how important it is as well. The limits of confidentiality would also be discussed and the fact that I am a mandatory reporter and I would have to report to the proper authorities if there was any threat of harming themselves or someone else. If I was subpoenaed I would also have to disclose information and the counselor-student relationship is not privileged. I would make sure I had informed consent, and be aware of personal relationships within the group and how they may or may not conflict with the group or outside of the group. I would also need to be aware of FERPA, which is the Family Rights as privileges act. Under FERPA, the parent has access to anything in the student's school record, except a counselor's personal logs and treatment records for the student. The parents also must sign an consent form before the counselor is allowed to discuss any information about the student with an outside source like a doctor or psychologist. The counselor can keep information the student discloses in sessions confidential from the parents unless, it is something that is required by law to disclose. As a professional school counselor I also need to be aware of and follow all ethical guidelines put forth by ASCA, ACA, AACC. I also need to be aware of national and state laws that effect school counseling.

2) Student creates a signed consent form to be distributed to parents of students prior to participation in group counseling to include limits to confidentiality in group work (attach as a supplemental form in LiveText for this section).

See attached for copy of consent form.

3) Student identifies how the group program is culturally sensitive, describes how issues of conflict, bias, prejudice, oppression, and discrimination are to be addressed during group, and identifies strategies included in the group program that promote a positive, caring, and safe learning group environments.

This group is culturally sensitive in nature as one of the main objectives is to develop self-confidence. With the high number of African American students and the small number Caucasians in the group it is a great chance to help them develop their cultural identity. Group members can also taught to be culturally sensitive, to respect and embrace our differences. Also, a great chance for them to learn how we can learn from each other and to help reduce prejudice, discrimination and oppression. Once they develop the relationship within the group, they can hopefully continue that relationship outside the group and teach their other friends about how differences are a good thing and not a bad thing. As conflict arises I would use my leadership skills such as blocking, redirecting, to help minimize the conflict. Depending on what the conflict is, more action may need to be taken, but it would be handled on a case by case basis. The hope is that if the group is effective that it would not only boost their self-confidence, but also boost their test scores, which would bridge more gaps between the two cultures.

4) Student discusses the importance of careful considering issues related to ethics, legal, professional, and cultural significance in the group process from making group opportunities available and member selection to group termination.

I would make sure to follow the meta-ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, fidelity, and justice. I would make sure that I am continuing to research and learn best practice so that I am competent in delivery what the group members need, to make sure that I myself am aware of any prejudices that I may have and that I have dealt with them prior to meeting with the group if possible, and if something comes up during group that I remain professional and have a consultation at a later time if needed on the best way to handle the situation. Legally, if an issues comes up that is in violation of ethics I would need to discuss it with the members, and let them know that I am obligated to follow the law. In the selecting of the group members, careful analysis was made as well as pre-screening each individual student to make sure that they would work with in the group. The students that were allowed in were the students that had not been proficient on the State Reading and State math tests. The next elimination was made by taking out the Special Education students that took an alternate assessment. Next, each student was screened by the counselor, to eliminate any student that may have issues working with other members of the group, who may have something going on at home, or may have other issues that needed to be addressed before group placement was appropriate. Any student that was unable to join the group due to theses other issues will be seen individually and an individual plan will be made for them. Group termination will occur after the sixth session, however, the counselor will still continue to monitor their progress and offer a review session a week prior to the next standardized test that they will take.

**Attachments**

* [Curran\_S\_Informed\_\_Consent\_\_for\_\_Group\_\_Counseling.doc](https://c1.livetext.com/folder/8967523/zwFjeszh_Curran_S_Informed__Consent__for__Group__Counseling.doc)

Component #4: Program Evaluation

1) Student creates a pre-post measure for session #1 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).

See attached pre-test/ post test for session one.

2) Student creates a pre-post measure for session #2 that includes only one multiple choice item for each session objective for a total of two items (one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content).

See attached pre-test/post test for session two.

3) Student briefly describes the importance of program evaluation and outcome-driven programming in professional school counseling

Just like with performing a needs based assessment and using data driven techniques to run the program, it is just as important to evaluate your program and make sure that the outcomes you were hoping to achieve actually happened. This allows you to see how effective the strategies were for you group of students. There are so many factors involved in students lives, that just because one group of students across the country was able to achieve effective results, that doesn't mean that you will be able to do the exact same thing with your group of students. By using program evaluation you will be able to see where the strength and weaknesses of your program are, and be able to make changes as needed. By showing to your stakeholders, where the program was effective and what your plans are for making any needed changes, they will be able to see the value in the program and allow you to continue to service the needs of the students.

**Attachments**

* [Pretest\_post\_test\_session\_one.docx](https://c1.livetext.com/folder/8967523/SLj4ntjc_Pretest_post_test_session_one.docx)
* [Pretest\_post\_test\_session\_two.docx](https://c1.livetext.com/folder/8967523/MwPHnbBY_Pretest_post_test_session_two.docx)

Component #5: Scholarly Writing

**Student uses correct grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and spelling.**

**Student includes at least three peer-reviewed journal articles to support group content and choice of theoretical approach and techniques—best practices.**

Students please contact the writing center, publisher of the journal, or research the journal using the Internet to determine if your selected journal is peer-reviewed.

**Attachments**

* [References.docx](https://c1.livetext.com/folder/8967523/dSh2MBBQ_References.docx)